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THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

BY

MARY ELIZABETH WALSH.

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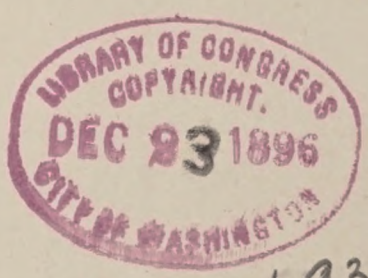
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

BY

MARY ELIZABETH WALSH



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BY
MARY ELIZABETH WALSH

PREFACE.

Beloved friends, who, at my side,
  Have walked throughout the changing year,
  In whom, through days both bright and drear,
I've learned to trust, whate'er betide;

Whose hands have made rough places smooth,
  Whose brave, kind words have cheered me on,
  Whose arms were strong to lean upon,
Whose love was quick to heal and soothe.

This little book for you I've made;
  You'll read, and reading, understand,
  (You've walked beside me hand in hand)
And so I give it unafraid.

For though its pages worthless prove
  To stranger eyes, 'twill not be so
  With you; old dreams will wake, I know,
Sweet memories your hearts will move.

And if some one of you will say,
  "Alas, that those dear days are lost,
  That Time has touched them with his frost"—
And grieve that they have gone for aye:

And if some word or line will lead
  Some one of you to say of me,
  "At least she loved us tenderly,"
Of praise I shall have had my meed.

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THE NEW YEAR

THE New Year is upon the threshold. The old year, spent and weary, is bidding us farewell. I feel the pang of parting smite my heart. "Stay," I cry, "Old Friend, you have been good to me and mine. You have walked beside us many days. The smiling boy who is to take your place is a stranger. We realize his power and we fear him. What if he rob us of our treasures?"

Even as I speak the midnight chimes ring out, and the old year passes from our view. "New Year," I say humbly, gazing at the young king who is to rule the world for a span, "disturb not our peace. We fain would dwell longer in the valley of content; fill our hearts and hands fuller yet from the plenitude of your bounty."

But he hears me not; my voice is drowned in the tumult without. The new year is receiving

a royal welcome. The bells ring joyously, the people shout in the streets. Already the old year is forgotten, as are the dead always. The living claim us; the living whose bounding pulses keep time with our own, whose throbbing hearts beat responsive to ours. Already I find myself smiling in response to the New Year's joy. Princess Beauty stirs in her sleep; the tumult without reaches her even in dreamland. She draws the doll which lies beside her closer to her little bosom. I kiss her softly and breathe into her ear good wishes for the new year. She smiles, and perhaps dreams that a fairy god-mother touches her with her wand.

Yesterday Princess Philanthropy walked forth, and behind her, at a respectful distance, walked a hireling. The hireling carried a bundle of generous proportions, and the bundle was composed of red flannel skirts, which dear Philanthropy had made for needy women and children, and so I, being of a frugal turn of mind, call after her: "Divide the surplus among the

gentlemen tramps." She scorns to reply. Philanthropy is never frivolous. Yet, I would not be surprised if, while the New Year is yet in swaddlings, a hundred or so of the reduced sterner sex appear in the red skirts. Freezing Humanity cannot afford to be fastidious, and I think a sprinkling of conventional Highlanders would be picturesque. If they are seen flitting through the streets, giving a bit of color to the wintry landscape, know ye all that it is Princess Philanthropy's work.

The year is ten hours old, and I, determined upon a good beginning, am starting out with my entire family to church. We are dressed in our best. Philanthropy, with her dark green gown, and her great hat throwing a shadow over her thoughtful eyes, looks like an animated Christmas Card. Prince Knowledge, in his new box coat, walks beside her. Active follows with Generosity, who has reached that age when her clothes seem to shrink over night. Gentleness has Beauty's hand, and is guiding

that little lady over the slippery places. Beauty is resplendent to-day in her new jacket and waving feathers, her curls frolicking in the breeze, a pink rose blowing on either cheek. I come last with Tiny and Winningways.

I feel that I possess a family to be proud of, and the feeling grows npon me as we walk up the church aisle. Philanthropy, although her back is toward me, reads my thoughts and turns to give me a mild reproving glance.

The day is as fair and sweet as a day in May. The whole world is flooded with yellow sunshine, and the bright rays stream through the stained glass windows, and throw fantastic bits of color over the devout faces of the congregation. Dignified Mrs. Bland has, seemingly, a blue nose, and a green ray has sadly transformed Mrs. Ruby's blond hair. Even the preacher does not escape, and when he ascends the pulpit a bright red crescent fastens itself upon his cheek, giving him a very unclerical aspect. He, good man that he is, wrestles with his text,

and exhorts us to put on the new man with the New Year, whereupon we all make up our minds to follow his advice. But alas! most of us permit the things of this world to choke the good seed.

He tells us—we have heard it a hundred times—that for some of us this will be the last year in time. We know this to be true, but oh, it cannot apply to us. We are well and strong and full of hope, There is old Hobbs who sits opposite; he is poor, idle and forlorn. And Mrs. E———, who has drunk deeply of the cup of sorrow, she looks spent and weary. They, no doubt, would welcome the grim messenger. We feel a little indignant with the preacher for thrusting such depressing truths upon us, and dampening our New Year joy. Who cares to start out feeling that this year may be his or her last? Such thoughts are, perhaps, holy and wholesome, but away with them. We cease listening to the sermon and picture to ourselves a long, peaceful life, a happy old

age. After life has given us all it has to give, then we will die. After we have eaten of the food, then we will willingly throw the empty husk aside, but we cannot die yet. When the preacher gets down from the pulpit, and the red crescent leaves his cheek and dances across to the tenor's mustache, we strive to shake off the melancholy thoughts his discourse has awakened, and we join in the hymns with such unwonted vigor that the musical man who sits in front of us turns and gives us an indignant glance.

We return from church in a very disorderly manner.

Prince Active deserts the family at the church door and springs over the church fence. The younger members of the family make for an attractive slide, upon the slippery surface of which poor Winningways came to grief. Down on my knees I go to examine the bumped head and dry the poor eyes. And when, after a little difficulty, I regain an upright position, I find

no one but Generosity near. Princess Philanthropy and Prince Knowledge are far up the street, and have evidently washed their hands of their family in distress. But Generosity, like the real princess that she is, brushes the snow from my disordered gown, picks up my muff and prayer book, which I had flung to the winds at Winningways' first shriek, and helps me home with the wounded member of my flock.

THE SNOW STORM.

IT was a chill gray day. The trees tossed their naked branches to and fro in a melancholy fashion, and the smoke from the chimneys had not the heart to mount to the sky, which hung low over the world, but tumbled off the roofs into the streets, and floated in ghost-like clouds before the people who were hurrying along, half hiding them from each other. The wagons rattled over the stone streets with a harsh, grating sound, and the sparrows, which usually are undaunted by wind and weather, seemed to have lost their cheerfulness and were mute and invisible, no doubt hiding in the eaves of the solemn-looking houses. Had the earth ever been green? Had the sun ever shone? Had the birds ever sung from pure joy up in the leafy tree-tops as they built their nests? Perhaps so, once upon a time, but so long ago one

could not recall it that dreary day. The grass in the garden was a dull brown, and some of the dead flowers still stood upright like Egyptian mummies, dark and grewsome. The wind sighed in a down-hearted manner and seemed to be playing a mirthless hide and seek around the corners of the houses. A hard day for the sorrowful to live through, and even the joyful felt the shadow of the sad world upon their hearts.

Presently out of the sky fluttered a few flakes of snow, but when they touched the hard earth they faded away from sheer fright and homesickness for their dwelling in the clouds. Then came other flakes, sturdier, braver of heart. These hid in the dead grass and in the frozen ruts in the road, and were presently joined by many of their companions. Down, faster and faster they came, dancing gleefully in the air, wheeling round and round, and then nestling down by their white companions on the earth.

And, as the snow fell, a great change came

over the world. The trees were no longer naked and tossing in the wind, but were clothed with ermine robes which were hung about with strings of pearls and bedecked with diamonds. The seemingly dead blossoms had bloomed anew, and lifted up great white roses on their white stems. The houses were gloomy no longer, but glistened with decorations more beautiful than the costliest marble, and each chimney was surmounted by a glistening band of white. In front of each house was a white railing, which, like the trees, was bedecked with pearls and diamonds. Over the rough road, upon which the wagons groaned and rattled in the morning, was spread a coverlet of the softest velvet, and the horse's feet and the wheels gave forth no sound. The world had grown strangely silent.

At the window stood a sad-faced woman, and as she looked out at the falling snow, tears chased each other down her cheeks. She was thinking of a newly made grave out on the hillside, upon which, only yesterday, she had laid oh, how lov-

ingly! a wreath of white chrysanthemums—and now the cruel snow was burying her little boy deeper and deeper every moment.

After a while the snow ceased to fall. The empty clouds scattered into fragments, and the blue heavens arched over the white earth. Then the sun shone upon the ermine clad trees, upon the velvet roadway, upon the bedecked houses, upon the white fences and the trimmed chimney tops, and upon the bushes bending beneath their snow roses. Whereupon, millions of gems, not seen before, blinked and glistened and sparkled in their white setting.

The children just out of school shouted with joy when they saw all these wonderful things, and they covered each other with snow until they became white figures in a white world. The gloom of the morning had all disappeared, hidden under the beautiful mantle which God had sent straight from Heaven to cover the cold bosom of the earth which had been stripped of her summer garb and left shivering in the November wind.

The sad woman at the window dried her tears and looked hopefully up to the smiling sky. After all, her child was not beneath the earth and snow, but somewhere above it all, folded close to the Master's bosom.

PHILANTHROPY'S DINNER.

ONE morning last week Princess Philanthropy came to my room earlier than is her habit, for my lady dearly loves her morning nap. She was dressed for a walk; up to her very ears in fur, a sprig of holly pinned on her breast. But she evidently had something of importance to say to me before starting out in the bracing winter sunshine. "Mamma," she began gently, but with that little determined air with which I am familiar, and before which I fall as might a house made of cards fall before a hurricane, "I must give a dinner. I have been invited out so often, and I am under many obligations to Mignonne, and indeed, to every one of my friends, for that matter."

When Philanthropy entered the room I was taking the first crimping pin out of my hair. Before I had taken out the second pin, she had

succeeded in making me feel that I have been somewhat shabby not to have suggested the idea, and when the pins are all out, I am positively thanking her for making my social duties clear to me. So the princess trips off, well satisfied.

We decide later on the all-important matter as to who is to take in whom, and then the less important, as to what they are to eat when they get in.

Princess Philanthropy writes the invitations—in my name of course—as my writing is too suggestive of the pot-hooks of yore to suit the present age.

When the night comes and twelve happy faces, beautiful with the incomparable beauty of youth, are gathered around the board, I am more than repaid for any trouble the event may have occasioned. In the middle of the round table we have placed a shining wreath of holly, and the red berries glisten in the candle light, for I insist upon candle light upon such occasions. I cannot turn upon the faces of my guests the electric

search light, nor illumine their countenances with the unbecoming gas. Not that it would matter in the present instance, for these fair young faces are free from the lines of care, but occasionally we dine charming men and women who have outgrown their youth, physically—the heart is always young, the poet tells us—and in the candle light we make believe we are still in the springtime of life. The horrid crow's feet are invisible, and the lines Time writes upon our brow cannot be seen. At Philanthropy's dinner the young faces glow as did their grandmother's, in the mellow candlelight.

Philanthropy and Knowledge are the only members of the family who dine with the guests. The other children and I dined on cold ham and tea in the butler's pantry at five. I sit in the hall where I can catch a glimpse of the men and maidens through the curtained doorway, and listen to the music of their fresh young voices. I see Prince Knowledge, playing the part of the genial host. On either side of

him sit Mignonne and sweet Imogene. The former has, I notice, a white chrysanthemum in her fair hair, and its companion is pinned to Ralph's coat; he sits at her right. Opposite Knowledge is Philanthropy, radiant in white and gold. My view is somewhat intercepted by Tiny and Winningways, who are anxiously peeping into the dining-room, wondering if there will be any good things left. Ham and tea leave much to be desired. Over the door I see something glistening, which, upon inspection, proves to be mistletoe. Beauty volunteers the information that Philanthropy hung it there. Is it possible! So different from what one might expect, remembering the flannel skirts. Verily, the human heart is a complex organ.

THE LITTLE PEDDLER

GENTLENESS called my attention to him. I thought he was begging, for the little basket on his arm looked so shabby, and he himself looked so woefully poor. I said something to him about going to the basement door and getting some food if he was hungry, but when I glanced at his face I saw my mistake—he looked so hurt, so misunderstood. "I am not a beggar, ma'am," he said gently, but with a certain dignity; "I'm in business." And he pointed to his basket to verify his words. I felt sorry for my blunder, and gave him a dime and hurried into the house, for it was a bitterly cold day. But somehow I could not get him out of my mind all afternoon. I saw him in the pages of the book I tried to read, and his face, with the delicate blush that covered it when I mistook him for a beggar, came between me and every occupation I

attempted. I remember that he had no overcoat, and no mittens on his purple hands, and I had not even asked him his name nor where he lived. If he would only come again. Finally I called the servant who had opened the door for him. "Yes," she said in answer to my inquiries, "he had been here several times before, but she did not think I would care for the things he had to sell, and so had always dismissed him." "Let me know if he calls again," I said, and with that I was obliged to be content.

Several weeks after this Beauty saw him come down the street with his brisk, energetic step; he glanced up at my door, hesitated a moment, and then, no doubt remembering past experiences, was about to pass by, when she knocked at the window and called him in. How glad I was to see him, and as I looked into his bright, manly face, I wondered how I had ever taken him for a beggar. It was the basket that had misled me, for I noticed that it was covered with a dingy brown oilcloth, which

gave it a weather-beaten appearance, but which, no doubt, added to its durability and protected the "stock." The "stock!" No merchant prince was prouder than was this lad as he displayed before me, much to Winningways' delight, the contents of the basket. Buttons, shoestrings, tape, matches, hooks and eyes, and all the cheapest of their kind. "You see," he said, "me and my brother support the family. Father died a year ago and we wouldn't let mother work, so we decided to go into business; and the business has grown considerable," he added with pride. "Is your brother older than you?" I asked. "Yes ma'am, he's a little older; you see we're twins, and you couldn't tell us apart," he added in such an exultant tone that one would think to have a duplicate was to reach the acme of bliss. "Mother can tell us apart; she's awful clever about everything. She makes our clothes and mends 'em," he added, glancing at his much-mended little jacket.

By degrees I learned the whole story. The

father died and left the wife and six children unprovided for—four little girls and twin boys ten years old. It was then that the brave lads determined that Mother should never work, and so they gave up school and went into business, and by trudging all day and every day from door to door, with their baskets filled with their cheap stock, they managed to keep the little family from want. "We go to night school," he said, "because you must get an education to carry on the business." Poor little fellow. No time had he for rest or play; no wonder he was thin and pale, and great circles were drawn under his dark eyes. After we had made some purchases, and diminished his stock and increased his cash on hand, and found a dress and a doll and a bonnet of Beauty's for the little girls at home, he repacked his stock, which he had spread over the floor for my inspection, and he trudged off, highly pleased.

From this time forth he called every few

weeks and I gave him a contract to supply the household with matches and bone buttons, although the housemaid complained that she could not light the former, and the latter had an awkard fashion of falling in two, if anything at all was expected of them. Once I found when I returned from town that he had called and left three lead pencils as gifts for the children. "You cannot afford to make presents," I said to him the next time I saw him. "Oh, yes I can," he said "a lady gave me three cents for nothing, and so I could give away three cents' worth." A generous heart throbbed beneath his threadbare jacket. "Lots of men who are rich now started in this business," he said one day, and mentioned several well-known millionaires as examples. "And lots of other men were poor when they were boys, and they wouldn't let their mothers work, and you see Mother's not as strong as some, and when we increase the business, we're going to buy her a silk dress, and then we will buy her a little

home with a garden and chickens and flowers, and after the business has grown wonderful, we may, (here his voice sank to an awed whisper) get her a little carriage with a white pony." It was all for Mother, no thought of himself; no desire for new clothes, or money to spend for selfish pleasures, but the business was carried on to keep Mother from working, and with the hope of giving her the comforts of life.

Sometimes he and his brother visited the country towns, he told me, where their stock was highly appreciated. On such occasions they would be gone several days, and he often told me of his mother's joy when they were safely home again. She always gave them an extra supper on such occasions, and the little girls were permitted to sit up an hour later than usual. Once his brother fell ill, and upon my little friend's slender shoulders was laid the double burden, but he bore it cheerfully. "You see," he said, "such things will

happen when one is in business; partners will get sick sometimes." I had given him an overcoat and some warm gloves, which Active had outgrown, but I noticed soon after this that he did not wear the coat, and that his hands had gone back to their semi-frozen condition. When I asked him what had become of his coat and gloves, he said that he had felt uncomfortably warm in them and had given them to his brother, who was just about again. "I don't need them," he said bravely, "a fellow gets terrible tough when he's in business." But he did not look very tough in spite of his words.

I told him one day that I was going away for a few weeks, but during my absence he must continue to furnish the family with matches and buttons, and he must be sure to come to see me when I got home. I promised to buy him a story book about a little boy who had been in business as young as he, and grew up to be a rich man. When I

returned from my visit I learned from Philanthropy that the little fellow had not called during my absence, and our supply of matches and bone buttons was very low. As the days and weeks passed and he did not come, I began to grow anxious and determined to look him up. But when Philanthropy and I succeeded in finding the isolated little house in which he had lived, I saw a sign "To Let" tacked upon the shabby door, and the house itself was empty and desolate.

There was nothing to be done now but to watch and wait. And at last, one day, when I had well nigh given up hope, he came—my poor little boy. As soon as I saw him I knew that something had happened which had crushed the joy and ambition out of his young heart. Around his shabby little hat some one, himself probably, had pinned a narrow band of black, and the attempt at mourning would have been ludicrous had it not been pathetic. I thought that his brother had perhaps had

a relapse, in spite of the overcoat and gloves, and had gone out of business permanently, leaving the junior partner to carry it on alone. But it was worse than this, much worse—his mother had died. He could not tell me all at once, but by degrees, between his sobs, I learned the sad story. They had returned from an unusually successful country trip, and had found her ill, and before they realized there was danger, she had died, and the little home was broken up. The little sisters were put to live with a hundred or two other orphans, and the two brothers were at a miserably cheap boarding-house.

"We felt at first as if we could not go on with the business," he said sorrowfully, "there seemed to be no one to work for when she left us, and she never even had the silk dress, and the little home———," but he could not finish the sentence. I tried to comfort him as best I could. I told him to think of the little sisters, and to keep up the

business for their sakes, and that some day he could have the little home, and they would take care of it for him, but he would not be consoled; he grieved after the hopeless fashion of childhood. It is when we grow older that we remember the silver lining to the clouds.

I promised to see the little sisters, who he said were sad and lonely without their mother, and he promised to try to be brave and patient, as his mother would have wished him to be, and he started off upon his weary round. I watched him from the window, but his step was slow and his face was sad. Evidently he spoke the truth — he had no heart in the business.

If you meet him you will know him by his basket, which is covered with oilcloth, and by his shabby but well brushed clothes, by his manly face and his beautiful eyes, and his sad, tremulous mouth. Stop, if you can spare the time, and say a few kind words to him; buy some trifle from him to encourage him, for his

child's heart is heavy, and his child's feet are walking over a hard, rough road. He had lost his mother, and has no heart in the business.

LENT.

THE days are growing longer, and now and then there is a breath of spring in the air. Will we ever grow too old to rejoice in the spring? When the first tender shoots pierce the earth, and the buds on the trees swell, and the bluebirds sing, we seem to be born again into a fresh, new world, and the old world, with its frost and ice and bitter cold, is forgotten, or remembered but as a dream, which melts and fades away when the day dawns. We have no real signs of spring yet, for it snowed yesterday, but a hint, a promise of what is to come, an assurance that all is well. Mother Nature is faithful to her trust. She holds in her bosom the tender young things that would die should the cold reach them, and when the brown earth grows warm beneath the sun's rays, and moist with the soft rain, she bids

them stretch their tiny necks and look around upon the world, the beautiful world, about which she whispered to them oftentimes during the long night that is past.

Lent has come. In the midst of our gaiety, at the height of it even, while the ball-room was filled with dancers, and the music throbbed and sighed, and the young laughed gaily, and the old laughed (but not gaily), while the wine flowed, and the banquet was spread ready for the feasters, Lent parted the curtains at the doorway and looked in upon the scene with her calm, cold eyes. One glance at her pale face, worn with fasting, and the dancers fled. She lifted her thin hand and the music was silent, and the laughter changed to sighs. Put out the lights, crush the flowers; put by all things that speak of mirth and festivity, anoint your brow with ashes, and consider well the fact, ghastly, overwhelming, but indisputably, horribly true, that "thou art but dust, and unto dust thou shalt return."

Alas, poor man! The spring brings back the flowers that bloomed last year, the trees that were seemingly dead are alive again, but the friend that fell asleep still sleeps on, he wakes not when the year awakens. He is dead, though Nature, clad in the beauty and vigor of youth, defies death. Faith tells us that these mortals will rise again as do the flowers, when God's angels herald an eternal spring.

Princess Philanthropy has folded away her dainty gowns of rose and blue and white, and donned a sombre garb, suitable for this season of penance, and not unbecoming to the fair penitent.

She and Mignonne are at church now, no doubt, lifting up their pure young hearts to Heaven; they repent who have not sinned. No doubt the Recording Angel will place to the credit of some less fortunate mortal their devout prayers.

MUSIC.

WHAT wonderful strides the world has made in music during the last twenty years! I do not mean the artistic world, but the everyday world—you and I and the people next door. It seems but yesterday that I was struggling through "Warblings at Eve" and "Monastery Bells" before an admiring circle of friends.

I thought of those times, which seem but as yesterday, but which in reality are far back in the past, while listening to Mignonne playing this afternoon. Philanthropy had asked for Liszt's "Polonaise," and I could fancy the manner in which Mignonne's little nose would go up should I unearth my old music book.

Mignonne plays well, even for this enlightened age. When one has listened to her, the average every-day player grates on one's nerves. Mignonne's touch is never harsh, is never

weak, but is as clear and sweet as the lark's song. What a gift the child has! And as she played, Ralph leaning over her, and Raymond watching her white fingers from across the room, I thought of another gift she possesses, which is a dangerous one for a woman to hold, the power to win hearts. Mignonne has but one heart to give, and can accept but one in return. What will she do with the others which have been laid at her feet, I wonder? Be careful, Mignonne, Cupid's wounds generally heal and leave no scar to speak of, but now and then he makes one so deep it bleeds to the end of life.

In the meantime she played on and on. Now it is the "Pilgrim's Chorus," now a minuet that brings before us the graceful dames of another age, now a tender ballad in which love answers love, now a Christmas hymn—we see the manger at Bethlehem, the wise men, the mother, the Child.

The room is dark, but Mignonne heeds it

not; nor do we. We are in another clime, another world. We hear the nightingale, we smell the orange blossoms. We step upon a silver ship; the sails fill; we are off, and probably would be sailing yet had not the maid just then brought in the lamps and announced dinner.

The organ-grinder is abroad. It is early for him. Generally he is mute during the winter months, and no doubt lives in some garret and eats up his summer earnings. In the spring he comes out of his retirement, his instrument freshly varnished, and renewed vigor in his strong right arm. But these are hard times and the profits of the summer were small, so he has, no doubt, been obliged to stay out all winter. He shows the havoc exposure has made upon him, and the organ seems to have felt it also, for I noticed to-day when he played "Annie Roonie" beneath my window that the upper notes were hoarse and wheezy, and some were no louder than a whisper. He

looked so disconsolate that I, remembering the "Carnival of Venice" days, felt my heart soften toward him, and threw him a few nickels to cheer his lot. The nickels were not mine. I was out of change at the time. Princess Generosity shook them out of her little tin bank. Many times a day does the princess shake this little bank for shivery old age, half-clad children—no one calls in vain upon her, and, strange to relate, the little bank never grows empty. Gentleness says the fairies fill it at night. Who knows? Perhaps they do. The organ-grinder touches his hat and moves on, limping as he goes. Poor fellow, how he must sigh for the sunshine of his native land. "Come away from the window, mamma," Philanthropy says, "you look so disconsolate you make me shiver." And, evidently thinking I need to be refreshed, she rings for tea.

MY NEIGHBOR'S BOY.

TO-DAY my friend, who lives not far away from me on another street, is stricken with grief. Yesterday she watched her boy run out to play in the winter sunshine. She put on the scarlet mittens and tied the little tippet around his neck. He kissed her when he left in his warm, impulsive, boyish fashion; she watched him from the window for a few moments, then turned to pick up the trifles he had scattered around the room, trifles dear to her because of their owner; how many times a day had she stooped to pick up the same things. A ball, a top, a knife, a little handkerchief, but she never wearied; of such tasks is a mother's life made up. She made the room neat and bright and warm against her darling's return. In fancy she could see the mittens drying before the fire, as they were nightly, and she could hear in

fancy the thrilling account of the snow-ball fight. In *fancy* she saw and heard these things, in fancy only, for, God help her! she was never to hear them in reality again.

The day grew late; the dusk deepened. She arose to go to the window to watch for her boy's coming; ere she reaches it, she hears footsteps in the hall—eager, hurried footsteps, the door opens—a stranger stands there, pale, agitated. He tells her that something has happened to her boy. For one moment her heart leaps to her throat with terror, but she is brave, and will not falter now, when her child is hurt and needs her. Besides, she assures herself, it is nothing; he has been hurt often before in his play, and mother's kiss has cured him—it will be so this time. Behind the messenger a man comes bearing a burden in his arms; her child has been run over. She is brave still even when she hears this. No doubt he is stunned; a limb broken, perhaps, and she takes him in

her arms and even tries to smile in the little white face. There is no answering smile, although the blue eyes are wide open and, seemingly, looking into hers. She kisses the mute lips; she puts her hand over the dear heart; she calls him by name, over and over again; he takes no heed. Alas, poor mother, your son is dead.

If he were only alive. No matter how desperately, cruelly wounded, there would still be hope, and love and skill might coax him back to health—but no, love counts for naught, skill is useless. Nothing can be done for him but to dress him in his grave clothes and hide him away in the earth, which claims all flesh, sooner or later. The mother holds him close to her broken heart. She cannot grasp the cruel truth at first. He left her well, happy, full of boyish fun, for an hour's play. Why, it was only this morning that she chided him for something! Only this morning! and it is not evening, and he is dead.

They tell her afterwards how it happened. The coachman (enveloped in his furs, speeding the spirited horses, so that the fair occupant of the carriage might be in time for the brilliant social function) did not see the little form start to run across the street, did not see it until the life which animated it had been cruelly crushed out forever. Tender hands bore him to his home—the home he had left so joyously but an hour before.

Beauty and Gentleness are grieved and awed at the sad fate of their little friend, and they have taken a bunch of white roses to lay upon his coffin. It is all that we can do to-day; to-morrow we can do still less—stand by his grave and weep, not for him, for he has won his crown early and easily, but for the mother who sits in her darkened home, and weeps for the little boy who kissed her and ran out to play, and was brought back to her, dead. If she had but known that that kiss was the last he would ever give her! A merciful

Father hides from us the knowledge of the things to come. But this He tells us; that in His mansions—if we love Him—we shall meet again those we have lost, and some day, poor mother, your little lad will kiss you again.

AUNT POLLYCARP'S ANNUAL.

EVERY year Aunt and Uncle Pollycarp give a family dinner, which they refer to as their "Annual." Aunt Pollycarp says she will give one once a year if it kills her, whereupon Prince Knowledge disrespectfully remarks that it is much likelier to kill us. I rather dread these family reunions. The younger members never warm up to them, and I, knowing that the absence of the least one of them will create consternation, begin to coax and threaten alternately, from the time the invitation is given, until the family, clad in their best, are on their way to the feaster's edifice.

Aunt Pollycarp's house is as complicated as the catacombs. It is small, but there are "unexpected pitfalls," so to speak. It was not all built at one time, but had been "added on to" according to the whims of the occupants. I

have never been able to get to the room I start for the first time I attempt it. For instance, if I wish to reach the sitting-room—which was an afterthought—I am apt to find myself in the pickle closet. And on one occasion, starting for the attic, I opened a door, evidently put there to mislead the unwary, and found myself, after a few breathless seconds (during which my whole past life rose clearly before me) in the vegetable cellar. Then there are two front doors, and it takes one, unless he or she be blessed with much firmness of character and a will of iron, quite a time to decide which to enter. And when the family leaves, its members are apt to become separated in one of the grewsome halls (unless they are tied together) and leave the house by different doors, and this has led to serious complications in the past.

Well, Aunt Pollycarp gave her "Annual" last week. She borrowed all my forks and glasses the day before, so that, for several meals we were obliged to have hash for the "piece de

resistance'' and eat it with spoons, and to drink from an improvised loving cup. Besides, she borrowed my cook-book, salt cellars, silver candlesticks, door-mat and my best pin-cushion. The pin-cushion was for the dressing-room, but, as there was no guide furnished the guests, the dressing-room remained undiscovered, except by one unfortunate individual, who succeeded in getting there, but alas! could not retrace her steps. In the excitement which always attends an ''Annual'' she was not missed, and was discovered some hours later in an hysterical condition in the laundry,

The dinner was good, but quaint. Uncle Pollycarp cares for nothing ''new fangled.'' There was not the uncertainty with regard to what is coming next that attends the modern banquet; we saw at a glance that we were expected to consume. There was the huge turkey, dressed like a ballet dancer in red tissue paper; the ham, bestuck with cloves; the chicken, covered with slices of golden carrots; and there

was hominy, sweet potatoes, and fried parsnips, and many other things. Then came the plum pudding, just like an inflated football in size and shape, and made after Uncle Pollycarp's grandmother's recipe.

After we had all eaten so much that we felt wretched and uncomfortable, and two buttons from Winningways back shot across the room, Aunt Pollycarp rang a bell, and the maid struggled in with a large bowl of apple toddy, also made after a recipe which had been in Uncle Pollycarp's family for generations. Then our host rose to his feet and proposed toasts to various members of the family present, who are looked upon as local shining lights, and one toast was to the memory of those who used to attend the "Annuals" but who are no longer with us. There was silence for a while then, and I saw Aunt Pollycarp brush away a tear. Then we all took a little more apple toddy, and Uncle Pollycarp said it reminded him of the good old times before the war, when he lived down in Maryland. And

Aunt Pollycarp said it reminded her of the time when she was young, like Princess Philanthropy is to-day, and Uncle Pollycarp came a-wooing. Then we all took a little more apple toddy out of respect for these antique epochs.

Princess Tiny and Princess Winningways were becoming restless, so I gave to each, to quiet them, a little paste-board box filled with charlotte russe, trimmed around the edge with candied cherries, and sat the darlings in a quiet corner where they would not disturb their elders. Uncle Pollycarp gave Beauty a wee bit of apple toddy, to "warm her up" he said, and I noticed that the glass was nearly full of apple, so comforted myself with the thought that she could find but little liquid to "warm up" with, so I returned to the "reminiscing" which is always one of the main features of an "Annual." After another glass all around, Uncle Pollycarp proposed a song, and the little house, with its various wings and additions, quivered with delight, as we all joined in the soul-warming ballad, "Should auld acquaint-

ance be forgot?" We all decided that it should not under any circumstances, and the party broke up.

I hastened to gather together my scattered family. I found Tiny and Winningways weeping in the corner where I had left them. "What is the matter dears," I ask anxiously, "did you not like the charlottes?" "Yes, mamma," they replied in tearful chorus, "but the crust was so hard." Heavens! they had eaten the paste-board. Where was Beauty? Asleep! beside her an empty glass. Ye gods! she had eaten the apple.

We finally reach home, a sadly demoralized family, and Aunt Pollycarp's "Annual" was wholly to blame.

HER DREAM OF FREEDOM

SHE was utterly worn out and tired of it all—this wearisome monotony—day in and day out the same old tasks to be performed. No wonder her brain reeled and her heart grew faint at the changeless aspect of the years to come. Thus she thought as she drew her low chair up to her work-basket, which was heaped high with the week's mending.

While she sewed she indulged in day dreams of what might come to pass some happy day, when she would have escaped from her present environments. Her surroundings were pleasant enough; the window near which she sat was low and broad; flowers bloomed near by, and her bird in its gilded cage hopped cheerfully about, and strove, every now and then, to cheer her with his sweet songs. She could, without turning her head, see away down the village street, at the foot of which the broad river ran; and even

beyond the river, where the hills rose sharply and shut out the rest of the world. In summer, sometimes, when the hills looked blue and seemed to melt into the sky, she had longed to put aside her mending and her other homely tasks, and cross the river and climb the hills, and journey into the unknown country beyond her vision. But to-day the world was covered with snow, and the sky looked gray and cold. So she fastened her eyes on her sewing and continued her discontented train of thought.

There was the marketing every morning; then the descent into the kitchen to oil the domestic machinery if things were not running smoothly; then the climb to the top story lest the housemaid be not battling with the dust, as behooved her; then luncheon with the hungry children, to be followed by a hasty trip to the shops, or, perhaps a visit from a tiresome neighbor. And this had gone on for more years than she cared to count. No wonder she was weary beyond telling. How she longed for a change of

thought, a change of scene; a chance to stretch her limbs, to take a long full breath of pure air, without realizing that she was wasting time by so doing. How joyfully could she bid adieu to the cook, the housemaid, the fat butcher, the green grocer. Even those whom she loved she fain would leave awhile, for she sometimes fancied that they had grown so accustomed to her love that they had ceased to value it. The holiday season would soon be here, she thought with a sigh, and her duties would be multiplied, and the winter days were far too short, crowd them as she might, to hold her tasks. Oh, to be rid of it all! And she lifted her sad eyes and fixed them upon the distant hills, with their white night-caps, leaning upon the bosom of the gray sky.

It is not often that our wishes are granted, and rarer yet that our dreams come true in this contrary old world, but hers did. She did not know exactly how it came about, but one day found her upon a gallant ship sailing the high

seas, her native land fading in the distance. It had been as delightful as she had anticipated to say farewell to her humdrum cares, and to leave some one else to wrestle with the fat butcher and the green grocer for tardy justice, but, somehow, the parting with the loved ones had been harder than she thought. The children's sweet faces were so sad when she kissed them good-bye; ever the memory of that scene rose before her and filled her eyes with tears, and hid the blue sea over which she was sailing. How would they get along without her, she wondered? Who would waken Robert in the morning, hear Susan's lessons, or bathe Margaret's head should she have one of her spells of pain? Perhaps she should have brought little Margaret with her, she thought regretfully; but no, it was best as it was; they would love her better when she returned to them. And so she turned her back upon the vanishing land and let the salt winds dry her tears.

She arrived in due season at the distant city

where she was to spend several months. Friends met her, and she said to herself as she grasped their hands: "Now I shall enjoy the freedom I have longed for." The days passed, but, to her surprise, she found herself listening for the children's voices, and, not hearing them, the world seemed very silent; and not seeing their familiar forms around her, the world seemed empty. It was near Christmas, and the shops were filled with tempting articles, and the streets were filled with happy boys and girls, but she disliked to look at the pretty things, now that she had no need to buy, and the sight of the laughing children made her sad of heart, because they reminded her of those she had left.

Outside the markets hung the beeves and fatlings in tempting array, and the sight reminded her of the fat butcher at home, and she felt her heart soften even toward him. She found herself trying to kill time, a new occupation for her. No matter how long she lingered in the wonderful galleries, or knelt in the dim

churches, or strolled through the beautiful city, there were always several idle hours on her hands ere the day was ended, and more than once she found herself longing for the despised mending. Why, at home the days were never half long enough—night always came before she was ready for it, and night always found the children around her; at the thought a pang of loneliness smote her heart. The days passed, and, if she were not happy, she undoubtedly had herself to blame, for the things for which she had longed were hers, the time of which she had dreamed had come—she was free from the wearisome monotony of domestic cares. Oftentimes at home, when she had one of her nervous headaches, the children's voices nearly drove her frantic, but now, when she was ill, the silence which surrounded her was oppressive; she felt overcome by it, and would fain have called aloud for the children to speak, had she not put the sea between them and her.

Christmas dawned, but it found her restless

and anxious. She walked along the streets in the early morn on her way to church and gazed into the happy homes, where the inmates were already enjoying the great festival. She saw the mothers, a little tired looking perhaps, but happy. And oh, the children! the joyful, beautiful children! And in the dim light of the winter's dawn she stretched out her arms and called aloud for her old darlings beyond the sea. She walked sadly back to her friend's house. They met her with anxious, frightened faces, and put into her hand a message. It contained but four words, but what bitter news they conveyed to the poor woman who tried to grasp their meaning. "Margaret is very ill." Little Margaret! Her baby ill! Perhaps even unto death, and she, her mother, far away from her. She rung her hands in agony and fell upon her knees, and begged God to spare her child.

Just then she felt a pair of arms around her neck, and a sweet voice, surely Margaret's voice,

in her ear. She raised her eyes, and lo! the snow-capped hills were in the distance and behind them the gray sky. And there she sat in her low rocking-chair in her bright window, with her mending beside her, and the children had just rushed in, rosy and hungry, from school. Her freedom had been but a dream—and, thank God, her sorrow a dream also.

OUR VISIT TO THE SUBURBS.

IMOGENE asked me to-day if I did not consider it one's duty to elevate the working classes. We were sitting in a railroad station, and I was in a low state of mind.

She and Philanthropy and I had been spending the day with a friend who lives in the suburbs whom we had been trying for a year to visit, but every time a day was appointed it either rained or snowed, or was insufferably hot or cruelly cold. I was quite discouraged, and had about made up my mind not to seek her society while we inhabited this mundane planet, but wait to enjoy her companionship until we reached a place where the climate was more even and transportation not attended with so many difficulties. However, she insisted upon our coming this particular day, and sent me a time-table with the early train deeply underlined. I

supposed, of course, the underlining was intended as a recommendation, and so changed all the meals and disorganized things generally, and reached the station in a breathless, overheated condition, only to learn that the early train had been taken off. My friend explained later in the day that she had intended to convey that information by the lead pencil lines. The next train left an hour later, and we spent the time walking up and down the depot platform, and scrutinizing the anxious, care-lined faces of the people who arrived from the suburbs, and those who, like ourselves, had misunderstood the time table and had missed the train. I suppose the constant anxiety to be on time, and the overwhelming thought that your whole future happiness or misery depends upon a minute more or less, gives one that hunted look. Indeed, since that morning, I can tell suburban men and women by their expressions.

At last the starting moment came, and I began to feel that after all we were really going

to succeed in reaching our friend's charming home. However, we were, unfortunately, unfamiliar with the appearance of the station at which we were to alight, and the brakesman seemed to speak a language entirely unfamiliar to us, so we were carried a mile past our destination.

When at last we returned my friend's welcoming embrace, and she asked us when we left home, I felt inclined to put the date back a week or so, I felt so weary and travel worn. After we had had luncheon and were somewhat refreshed, she showed us with pride the various reasons why everyone should live in a suburban town. "In the first place," she said, "there was the air, so pure, so exhilarating; then there was the vegetable garden, the chickens, the cow, the croquet ground, the tennis court—" "and," I added, "the time-table." But she assured us that the latter was no drawback whatever, that one got used to it and after a while carried a time-table as naturally as a

pocket handkerchief, a purse or any other article that one had grown up with.

Even as she spoke a faint whistle sounded in the distance, at such a distance and so faintly that I, with my city-bred ears, would not have noticed it, but my hostess spent most of her time listening for whistles, and across her face came the suburban expression. "I don't want to hurry you," she said nervously, "but in a few minutes your train—" We waited to hear no more, but rushed toward the house, falling over croquet wickets and trampling the young vegetables in our flight. We seized our wraps and fled, making our toilettes in the village street. We postponed our adieux indefinately. Who can say good-bye when that puff puff is growing louder and more near every second? The neighbors hearing the commotion, ran to the windows to see what was disturbing their quiet lives, but we looked neither to the right nor left. Alas! our haste was in vain. The conductor would not heed our frantic gesticula-

tions, and the train moved off just as we reached the station.

When Imogene asked me the question with regard to the working classes, I was in no mood to help my fellow man. The next train would not be along for an hour, but she, of course, was unruffled. After I had recovered my breath and reflected a little, I replied that I thought I had done considerably more for the working classes than they had ever done for me. I had paid them unreasonable bills without a murmur, although the doing of it had often left me seriously embarrassed financially. She said I did not catch her meaning exactly, that she referred more especially to the servants; had I made their lives easier, tried to better their condition? "Of course," I replied, and called Philanthropy to witness that I had covered my kitchen with oilcloth to save my cook's knees, had purchased two rocking chairs so that she could enjoy her cousin's society as comfortably as possible. And I had also purchased a patent

dryer and a washing machine for the laundress. Imogene smiled a faint, indulgent smile, and went on to say that she referred more particularly to their mental and spiritual condition. Had I striven to expand their views, to lift them up, so to speak? "Certainly," I replied. I felt myself warming up to the subject. "Did I not give the waitress my Charity Ball ticket, and send the nurse to Mr. Philibustus' lecture on the works of Moses?" These philanthropic acts of mine did not seem to satisfy Imogene. She said it was not an occasional kind act, but striving without cessation that would accomplish a great work; and such she considered the beautifying of the wage workers' lives. She had joined a club organized for that purpose. The members proposed renting a house in some picturesque spot, and inviting the working girls out for the summer months, not all at once, of course, but a few at a time, and they proposed having musical evenings, literary evenings, and some of the most promising would be given lessons in

Delsarte. Philanthropy said the idea was beautiful, and she thought we owed much to those who were called to lives of toil.

Just then the train drew up at the station and we were dragged aboard by the accommodating conductor.

"Yes," I said to Princess Philanthropy later in the evening (she was wrapping up my throbbing head in "vinegar and brown paper" as awkward Jack's noddle was wrapped by the patient Jill) "the luncheon was delicious." The vegetables and chickens she had raised herself, and the omelette was made of eggs laid by her favorite hen. The cow that we saw eating grass near the dining room window, gave the rich milk and cream; but somehow I prefer the impersonality of a city luncheon. One does not know, of course, where anything comes from, but one escapes the uncanny sensation of devouring one's friends.

I am content, so depraved is my taste, to spread butterine on my bread, buy vegetables

from the green grocer around the corner, eggs from the cold storage, and milk from the deceitful milkman; aye, even fill my lungs with the germ-laden city air if I may be freed from the drawbacks of a suburban home, chief among which is the bewildering, misleading time-table.

OUR JOURNEY TO THE SEA.

GENTLENESS has been looking pale of late. The dear child is never strong and the winter tells upon her. "Give her a breath of sea air," the doctor says. So I fling to the winds the cod liver oil and iron, and prepare for flight. I buy the younger princesses ready-made yachting suits, remodel some of Philanthropy's outgrown finery for Generosity, purchase a ready-made costume for myself which will suit all occasions, and which is capable of as many transformations as a folding bed, but lacks the deadly element of the latter, and, thus equipped, we start off in the early morn of a sunny day. The spring has come in earnest; the promise has been fulfilled; the trees are faintly green, and at dawn when I awakened and tried to remember how many things I had

forgotten, the air was vocal with the chirpings of happy little birds.

> "O soft, melodious Springtime,
> First born of hope and love."

The whole family accompany us to the station, and Philanthropy, noticing my downcast expression, bids me not to be foolish and worry, but to be wise and enjoy myself. As for her, she will be kept occupied; she adds: she intends entertaining her Sunday-school class, and as the younger children will not be home, I need have no fears of the measles, scarlet fever, etc. (this last in a sarcastic tone), "Besides, the Waif's Mission . . . ." But I am destined never to know what awaits the Waif's Mission, for just then the carriage door flies open and I grab Tiny just in time to save her from a violent death.

I am in an agitated frame of mind. I have an overwhelming feeling of responsibility. Who knows what may happen before we return? I remember once having read in a paper how a

whole family was wiped from the face of the earth in a week's time.

I also have a sensation of having lost something, and I open my traveling bag every few minutes to assure myself that my fears have no foundation. Yes, here are the railroad tickets, here the sleeping car tickets, here the keys and time-table. Heavens! my purse! "Stop the carriage!" I exclaim, "I have lost my purse."

Philanthropy catches my arm as I am about to open the door. "Your purse is in your hand, mamma," she remarks calmly, and I sink back in my seat, abashed and subdued, but not consoled, for now I am convinced that my mind is hourly growing weaker, and I am in no condition to leave home with five children.

When we reach the station Knowledge gives me the trunk checks, which still further bewilder me and increase my responsibility. The three older members accompany us into the car and deposit our personal property on the

seats. What a sight! Five satchels, three umbrellas, six waterproofs, a traveling clock, a medicine chest, a thermometer, a luncheon box. Each child makes a wild dash for the windows, and, as there are but four windows and five children, some temporary excitement ensues.

I feel that I have a dozen things to say to those I am about to leave, but can think of none of them, so we sit silently gazing into each other's faces until the conductor shouts "All aboard," and they rise to go. A calm kiss from Philanthropy, a dignified ditto from Knowledge, and a hug from Active which leaves me dazed and breathless, with a vague impression that I have been struck by a cyclone. The train moves off slowly and we wave adieux to the three familiar forms standing on the platform. Suddenly a bend in the road hides them from our view, whereupon Winningways bursts into tears and exclaims in stentorian tones that she is "going right straight home."

In vain I coax and plead with her; she wails the louder. I look around the car; not a child but my own is visible. My fellow travelers are, apparently, single ladies and gentlemen or rich childless widows and widowers; no sympathy to be expected from them. I turn to Winningways and paint in rainbow hues the pleasures awaiting us at our journey's end. She howls on.

A happy thought strikes me. I untie the luncheon box and hold it before her. Quiet is restored, and the family revel in sandwiches, cold tongue and jam. I take advantage of their preoccupation to count over my checks, etc.

How we speed over the prairies, which are thickly dotted with golden dandelions! Now and then we stop at small towns and look out at the solemn looking people who have come down to see the train, seemingly looking for friends who never come. When the day grows late and the little ones are asleep, Generosity

and I gaze out at the primrose sky, in which the stars are just beginning to twinkle. The lights are also twinkling in the farm-house windows; how forlorn, how solitary these homes appear! I find myself wondering about the inmates; are they happy in their lives of toil and monotony—do they love each other as we do? Then my mind goes back to the home we have left. The lamps, do doubt, are lit in the parlor, and Philanthropy is probably sitting before the open fire, toasting her dainty toes and waiting for dinner to be announced. I am positively getting homesick, so, after counting over the contents of my satchel once more, I kiss Generosity and go to bed.

When we awake the next morning and look out of the window, what a view greets us! The dandelion-dotted prairies have disappeared, and lo! we are climbing a high mountain whose sides are hung with laurel and,

"Whose sunbright summit
Mingles with the sky."

Beneath lie the peaceful valleys, emerald green. If yesterday was spring, to-day is summer. Beauty and Gentleness are wild with delight and feel as did Alice in wonderland.

In the afternoon we reach the beautiful city where Uncle Pollycarp was born. The familiar carryall awaits us at the station, and is sufficiently large to hold us and our luggage as well. It is built somewhat after the fashion of the Ark, and, like its model, is weatherproof. There is nothing vulgarly new in its appearance nor alarmingly swift in the gait of the horses that are attached to it. But we are in no hurry, and we enjoy the ride up the broad avenue to the old house in which Uncle Pollycarp's grandfather lived and died.

We notice as we jog along how quiet, how peaceful, how restful everything is. No bewildering rush, no senseless hurry. We pass in a beautiful park a statue of George Washington clad in the garb of a Roman Senator. What memories it awakens! I forget for the time

being the five princesses who are with me. I am a child again, gazing up at that wonderful figure with admiration and awe. How majestic it looked in those days! On the other side of the park is the round pond in which the red and gold fish swam; what a treat it was to throw them a handful of crumbs through the iron railing, and watch them come from the green depths to fight for it. Above the pond was the dragon fountain. Loving arms lifted me up long ago that I might fill the huge iron dipper with the cool, pure water. Ah! this was in the days that are gone. Time has wrought some cruel changes, but George Washington sits there unchanged, unmoved. He seemed old when I was a child, and now, that I am old, he seems young.

A great many aunts and uncles and cousins call to see us at the old house. We visit the beautiful City of the Dead on the hillside, at the foot of which flows a broad river. Here lie many who loved us tenderly long ago, and

whom we love now more than we did then, because we have grown older and understand.

When we have said good-bye to the living and the dead, we gather together our shawls and umbrellas, and refill our luncheon box and turn our faces to the sea, and when it greets our vision in all its sublimity, in all its immensity, sparkling as if strewn with countless diamonds, the children clap their hands with delight, and we drink in the delicious air and are glad we were born. I notice on Gentleness' cheeks faint roses are already blowing. I tried to catch a glimpse of the sea from my bedroom window when I rose, but did not succeed—although I leaned over so far that I lost my balance, and would probably have made a rapid an unexpected descent to the balcony below, had not Generosity clung desperately to the end of my dressing gown, so it is not until we come out of doors after breakfast that we find what we came so far to seek.

As we walk down the broad board walk a

feeling of supreme content steals over me. I am become reconciled to life just as it is, with its numerous vexations, its wearying disappointments. The mood will not last, I know. In a few hours the desire to reform the universe and remodel my friend's characters will rush back upon me with sevenfold force, as did the devils upon the unfortunate man the Bible tells about, but at present the devil of discontent is completely exorcised, and I stoop to kiss the children out of exuberance of joy. We make some purchases in the queer little shops which bound the board walk on one side and form the ocean's vis-a-vis. I buy an instructive book for Generosity, some buckets and shovels for the younger children, and a novel for myself.

I have the children's picture taken as a souvenir of the visit. The artist stands them upon a rustic bridge, shovels and buckets in hand, and under the bridge he places a bushy door-mat, which, he explains, will look like a raging torrent in the picture. But the group is not,

strictly speaking, a success. In the first place the children all assumed, for some unknown reason, an expression of profound melancholy; and just as they are "being taken" and the artist has uncovered his head, and turned his back, watch in hand, Winningways dropped her bucket over the bridge railing into the torrent beneath, and evidently had a notion of going over after it, for she appears in the picture with both heels in mid-air, Gentleness and Beauty clinging to her for dear life.

The tide is out and we walk over the stretch of yellow sand to the water's edge. The children dance with delight as the little waves, with their white crests, come up to their toes and then dance away back out of sight; perhaps they go to kiss children's toes on the other side of the world. After a while the tide begins to come in. The sea is returning from that mysterious daily jaunt of hers, and we retreat, inch by inch, before the advancing water, until we find ourselves on the board walk again,

against which the waves toss and pitch in such a boisterous fashion that Winningways clings to my gown in fright. A cool sea breeze has blown in with the tide, so we gather up our buckets and shovels, turn up our coat collars and hurry back to luncheon.

The young princesses find the merry-go-round highly interesting. They can take their choice of animals, for in the huge circle is represented every variety in the kingdom known to science, and some (I conclude after viewing the collection) which are as yet undiscovered. I sit at a little distance and watch the happy riders; each is strapped upon her chosen steed; Gentleness and Tiny have selected camels with exaggerated humps. Beauty is upon the back of a dangerous looking lion, and Generosity sits in a golden chariot with Winningways beside her. Round and round they go; each time they pass me they smile and wave their hands—as if to assure me that, in spite of their delight, they are not unmindful of me, and I smile and wave back,

much pleased to see my family so bravely mounted.

At dinner three women sit opposite us, lofty of mien and cold of manner. I gather from their conversation that they are from an aristocratic city near by, where, I have heard tell, they draw very fine social lines, where even streets are divided against themselves. I suppose the line of demarkation is drawn down the middle of the cobble-stone road, invisible to the eye, but as difficult to pass as a barbed wire fence.

I fear these ladies are disposed to look down on the wild and uncultured West, for they glance at my innocent offspring, as the latter, clad in their ready-made yachting suits, walk into the dining room, as if the darlings were miniature Buffalo Bills. They are telling of some one who has committed suicide by marrying a man who occupied a social position less lofty than her own; he probably lived on the wrong side of the thoroughfare. I find myself

becoming quite interested in that reckless woman who has dared to cross the line on the cobble-stones and wed the man of her choice. "They seem to be happy," the least blue-blooded of the three remarks timidly. The others glare at her with marked disapproval and repeat in dirge-like tones: "Impossible; impossible."

We remain at the sea until we are satisfactorily sunburned; until the faint roses on Gentleness' cheeks have deepened in color; until the yachting suits have faded from navy blue to purple; until we have selected souvenir spoons for all our friends at home; until the head waiter (evidently not realizing his expectations with regard to fees) has turned on us the cold shoulder; until we are well-nigh penniless, and then we go home.

We send no word of our coming, but intend surprising the family. We reach the city, in which we have the good fortune to live, about bed-time. I express the hope that they will

not disturb Philanthropy's "beauty sleep."

I notice as we approach our modest dwelling that it is brilliantly illuminated, and as we mount the front steps, a delicious odor of coffee and oysters greets us. The door is opened by a strange colored gentleman in evening dress, and he seems quite undecided about admitting us. I begin to feel like a modern Rip Van Winkle. As we proceed slowly, handicapped by our personal property, we see gaily-dressed men and women; among whom we recognize sweet Imogene, Mignonne and Philanthropy. The latter advances and gives me a welcome embrace, and then says, reassuringly, "Don't look so startled, mamma; we are merely giving a Musicale for the benefit of the 'Tramp's Resort.'"

THE CAPTAIN'S STORY.

THE boat was skimming over the water; we were sailing up the broad inlet, and the wind blew in puffs from the salt marshes. The day was overcast, and the sea, toward which we were making our way, looked grim and relentless, as it does oftentimes when the sun is not shining. The Captain stood with his hand on the tiller, and stooped now and then to look under the sail, lest we get too near the reedy shore. The inlet is a broad arm of the sea, and it winds in and out and around about the salt meadows like a wide river.

The Captain interested us. He was gray, weatherbeaten and picturesque; he looked as if he might have a history; the artist from Boston was slily sketching him.

"No, mum, I have no son that could give me a helping hand," he said in response to a question. "I never married until two years or so

ago, although I am well nigh on to fifty years old. I have lived most of my life on the sea, and a man who loves the sea should have no other love; he has no right to marry and leave his wife home to fret and worry. I was born over yonder,'' and he pointed away over to the right in the gray distance. ''I ran away from home when I was nine years old, and all on account of a pair of nankeen breeches which Mother made for me and wanted me to wear, although I was set agin them. I ran away to the wharf and hid in a ship which was about to sail, and when the Captain found me we were miles out at sea.

''Mother felt terrible when she found it out, so they told me afterwards, and used to sit and watch the sea for hours, praying for me to come back. But we were gone a long, long time, and when the ship got into port I did not intend going to see the folks at all—boys are that set and stubborn—but when I was on the mizzen top one day tying up a bit of canvas that had blown loose,

my sister came aboard looking for me, and, although I ducked my head behind the mast she knew me all right. She made me promise to go up to the house that night. And mother never said a cross word to me when I got there, but broke down and cried when she saw me. The girls said the nankeen breeches were folded away in her top drawer, along with the silk dress she got when she was married, and she often looked at them and said she was sorry she asked me to wear them, for they were no kind of a fit, and I was terribly proud-spirited. They all tried to make me promise to stay at home. Mother said she was getting old and wanted me with her, but I was determined to go to sea again. I used to fancy at night I heard it calling me, and when the ship started out I was aboard her. We were gone several years that time, and when I got home great changes had taken place. The home was broken up, and Mother—she was dead."

Here the Captain stopped speaking and drew

his faded coat sleeve across his eyes. "I am such a fool," he said apologetically, after a short time. "I can't speak of her without breaking down—after all these years. Well, no one cared where I went after that. My sisters were married and had families of their own, so I made up my mind that a ship would be the only home I should ever know, and that I should live and die on the sea. However, here about three years ago I concluded to marry and settle down, so I bought a little place not far from the churchyard where they buried Mother. I thought if the dead do know what is going on here, it might be a comfort to her to have me give up the sea—she never had no use for it—and to live near her. A year ago my little Susan was born, and when I held that little thing in my arms, and felt my heart well nigh bursting with love, I knew then, for the first time, how much my mother loved me, and how much I had made her suffer, and all on account of those derned nankeen breeches. Sometimes now, when little

Sue and I go off together to look after flowers which I planted on mother's grave, I have a real good cry thinking of her—after all these years."

We had reached the open sea and the Captain looked at the sullen water and the threatening sky, shook his head wisely, turned his boat about, and we sailed back through the inlet, and the wind blew in from the salt marshes. We tried to cheer him on our way home, but his face looked hard and set. Our idle questions had opened the flood-gates and the past was rushing back upon him. In spirit he was in the old home again with his mother, and, thank God, he knew how much she had loved him—after all these years.

THEIR GOLDEN WEDDING.

LAST week Aunt and Uncle Pollycarp celebrated their golden wedding. They have walked side by side along the uneven path of life for fifty years. Fifty years—with their checkered shine and shade—grateful when the way was smooth beneath their feet, and patient when it was rough and hard to travel. Yet I heard Uncle Pollycarp say when he looked backward it seemed but as a day since he and Aunt Pollycarp were married in the little old church among the Virginia hills. It was in the morning, that wedding day, and now it is evening; the shadows are lengthening along their path, the sun hangs low in the sky—dear Aunt and Uncle Pollycarp!

They stood in the corner of their quaint parlor the other night to receive their friends; their little house was brilliant with lights and

fragrant with flowers, and was in holiday attire, as a house should be for a golden wedding. Aunt Pollycarp wore a silver-gray dress, just the color of her hair, and across her bosom was draped the same lace that bedecked her wedding gown, but the heart beneath throbbed more slowly, I fancy, than it did fifty long years ago. Uncle Pollycarp gazed at her admiringly; time had but increased his fondness for her; his love had waxed stronger with the passing years. Over their heads hung their pictures, painted before their honeymoon had waned. Aunt Pollycarp was slight, girlish and rosy, and Uncle Pollycarp, resplendent in blue broadcloth and brass buttons. Life was before them when they sat for those pictures; their young faces were full of expectation and hope; their eyes eager to pierce the veil which hung before the future. What precious gifts, they wondered, had Time for them in his keeping? Now, alas! life is behind them; they have tasted its joys and its sorrows, but, thank God,

contentment and love still warm their hearts.

The guests came early to the golden wedding, and soon the house was filled with men and women and little children, for Aunt and Uncle Pollycarp invited all those who loved them, young and old. After a little while Uncle Pollycarp fell a-dreaming after a manner of his. The past was blotted out; he fancied he was celebrating his wedding day long ago among the hills, and he looked beyond the friends who were around him and seemed to be expecting some one who still tarried. "Why do not George and Ruth come?" he asked. "They promised to bring us the trailing arbutus, we saw it in the woods yesterday."

"Not yesterday, dear, you forget," Aunt Pollycarp whispered, "but see, George is here."

As she spoke, through the doorway came a white-haired man, bent and tottering with the weight of years; he carried in his hands a bunch of arbutus which he gave to the bride, "In memory of that day fifty years ago," he said,

"when we gathered it for you, Ruth and I."

"Ah, yes," Uncle Pollycarp said softly, "I remember, dear Ruth is dead."

Just then some nieces came up to the old man and he smiled upon them and came back from the past to the present. Ah, me! how many who came to that first wedding were absent from this golden wedding. There was Aunt Pollycarp's father, who gave the bride away, and her gentle mother; they have been sleeping peacefully for years in the shadow of the little ivy-clad church. And Uncle Pollycarp's best man, who went to the war and never returned; and the fair bridesmaids—Ruth was not the only one of that bright band who laid down the burden of life and passed into the land of shadows. And yet, how full of hope and happiness were they all fifty years ago! Yet all went merrily in the little house in spite of the absent. When the hour grew late the guests departed one by one, the flowers drooped, the lights burned low—Aunt and Uncle Polly-

carp's golden wedding day was nearly done.

In the flickering candle-light those old fashioned lovers sat alone, hand in hand. "It was sad after all to-night dear; I missed them very much." she said.

"Yes," he answered slowly, "but somehow I fancy they were not so far away. If they love us as they did in the dear old days, surely they came to our golden wedding."

I fancy that when the guests from shadowland heard Uncle Pollycarp say this they were pleased, and drew nearer yet, and stroked the gray heads tenderly; for love is deathless and knows neither time nor change, and as this faithful pair sat hand in hand, dreaming in the dim light, over their hearts brooded a peace, sweeter than they had ever known, even upon that glad May day long ago, and more precious than joy or hope. And who shall say it was not the gift of those unseen guests who came to Aunt and Uncle Pollycarp's golden wedding?

MISS BETTY AND MISS PATTY.

A FEW years ago a good man was called hence by his Master (in whose Blessed Name he had done many things) to enjoy the reward he so justly deserved. Several years before his death he erected in Washington — that most enchanting city — in memory of a beloved daughter who died in early womanhood, a home for impecunious elderly gentlewomen, When the house was built and filled, the charity was recognized as a noble and much-needed one, and people wondered why some philanthropic soul had not thought of it long before.

The home resembles in no way a charitable institution. Situated in one of the most fashionable neighborhoods, surrounded by sloping terraces, and hung about with English ivy, it suggests wealth and ease rather than poverty, and carries no mark that could wound in any

way the pride of the gentle inmates. The women who have sought its shelter are, without exception, of refined bearing and gentle birth, women who have outlived their fortunes, and have drifted into this peaceful haven to spend their latter days.

When I was a very young child I accompanied my grandmother on a visit to some friends in Virginia. I remember well the old colonial house built on the hilltop, with broad porches, supported by huge, round, white pillars. Around the pillars a yellow honeysuckle vine twined and twisted, and, attracted by its sweetness, the gorgeous humming-birds darted in and out all day long, sparkling in the sun like jewels. In the distance the broad Potomac glided along, and up and down the river the lazy steamboats plowed their way during the summer days. The inmates of the house were as delightful as one would expect to find them in such a home. The genial old Colonel, with his courtly manners, his gentle wife, and their two charming

daughters, Miss Betty and Miss Patty, comprised the household. Theirs seemed an ideal existence, living among the Virginia hills, their lands stretching miles away in every direction, flowing with milk and honey—what was there in life for them to desire? There was no premonition of the storm that was gathering over them, and which was to sweep over and leave desolate that beautiful South Land. Miss Patty and Miss Betty won my childish admiration at once. I never tired of listening to their soft voices, nor of gazing into their sparkling eyes. Their hair, which was as black as a raven's wing, they wore combed over their ears and knotted low upon their necks. But what I admired most was their tiny, white, soft hands, not fit for labor surely, but made to be cherrished and caressed and held firmly in stronger hands, should the path of life grow rough or hard to travel. Miss Betty and her sister both had lovers, tall, handsome men, who owned farms in the next county, and who rode over to

see their lady loves every evening. Oftentimes the four young people would sit on one of the broad porches during the long summer evenings, and Miss Patty would sing in a low, sweet voice, "Flow Gently, Sweet Afton," or "Thou Hast Learned to Love Another," and Miss Betty would play a soft accompaniment on the guitar. The latter song was my favorite. There was a despairing pathos in it which touched my heart. It seemed to be the young men's favorite also, for, sometimes as they prepared to leave they would ask Miss Patty to sing it until they were out of hearing, and they would ride away in the yellow moonlight to the melancholy tune of

"Thou hast learned to love another,
Thou hast broken every vow——."

My grandmother and I remained under that hospitable roof for many weeks, and when we took our departure we expected to meet our friends (whom I had learned to love dearly) before many months had passed. But the clouds of war which had been gathering almost unno-

ticed soon began to grow darker and denser each day, and after we had trembled for months at their angry mutterings, the storm of shot and shell burst over the land, and the hills and valleys of Virginia which we had watched bud and blossom beneath a sky peaceful and serene, ran with blood and Death alone reaped a harvest. We heard but little of the Colonel's family for a long time, but after a little, straggling pieces of information reached us, and as the dreadful years passed by, we learned that the happy young lovers who rode off in the moonlight to the music of Miss Betty's voice, had fought side by side, had fallen in the same battle and shared the same unmarked grave. The Colonel, deprived of his slaves, his lands rendered barren and desolate, died of a broken heart, and his wife soon followed him. Miss Patty and Miss Betty were left alone in the white house. Alone but for the memory of happier days which were always with them.

My grandmother died before the war ended,

and after that I heard nothing of the two lonely sisters for a very long time. When visiting Washington a few years ago I learned that Miss Patty and Miss Betty were living, had never married, and were inmates of the Home, with its velvet terraces and its beautiful mantles of ivy. It was a bright April day when I went to visit them. As I walked up to the door between the fragrant hedges, and inhaled the breath of the lilac and syringa blossoms, I thought the fortunes of war had not been quite merciless, since they had driven my friends to this delightful haven.

I was kept waiting some time in the pleasant parlor. "Evidently," thought I, "Miss Patty and Miss Betty still retain a remnant of their youthful vanity," and were "fixing up," and I recalled the careful toilets I had watched with awe when I first knew them, when they expected the youths from the next county to ride over to see them. That was when they were young, beautiful and beloved.

After awhile I heard the rustle of skirts and the sound of soft, timid footsteps, and Miss Betty and her sister stood before me. Time and sorrow had almost obliterated all trace of the Miss Betty and Miss Patty I had known—almost, but not quite. Nothing but Death could still those sweet voices or chill that gracious manner. There was no remnant of the black hair I had admired so much as a child; the hair that was left was snow-white, and drawn smoothly back under the dainty caps of lace which each wore. Many tears had dimmed the luster of their eyes, and their pretty hands looked shriveled and the blue veins stood out like cords, but Miss Betty and Miss Patty held themselves as erect and stately as of old. We were soon seated side by side, talking affectionately of old times.

"You see, dear," Miss Betty said, "It was very lonely in the old home after father and mother left us, yet we thought we would remain there as long as we lived, but, somehow, it grew more difficult each year. We were obliged

finally to sell one piece of furniture after the other to keep us in food and fuel. Some Northerners came down in our neighborhood and seemed to take a fancy to our old mahogany, and so they bought it, little by little. It was hard to part with the things we had so long, but, after all, we did not need them. The last thing we sold was the great bedstead that belonged to father's father. Patty and I cried a little the day we saw that carried away, although we thought we had no tears left."

"Betty and I concluded it was time to leave, ourselves, then," said Patty, beginning where her sister paused, overcome by sad recollections. "The house was out of repair and going to ruin, and so we gathered up a few trifles, and paid a farewell visit to the dear graves at the foot of the hill, and then turned our backs upon our home forever. We have saved enough from the sale of the house to take us back when we die, for we want to lie down by father and mother when life is over and done with."

Dear Miss Patty! Dear Miss Betty! They looked beautiful to me with their sweet, faded faces and snowy hair, more beautiful than when I first knew them in the flower of their youth. They were not really old, and had fate permitted them to have wedded their youthful lovers, they might have been presiding over homes, the happy mothers of children, looking forward to many years of life. I was anxious to do something for them, and begged to be permitted to add some comfort and pleasure to their lives, but they said "no," they were "quite content;" they were surrounded by congenial companions, and each day they blessed the memory of her in whose dear name the house had been built which sheltered them and many like them upon whom the world had turned a frowning face. They were still sweet and gracious women, unimbittered by grief and changing fortunes. I kissed their soft, faded cheeks in parting and promised myself a visit with them in the near future.

The next spring I found myself again in Washington and hastened to inquire for my old friends. "Those old ladies from Virginia?" asked my cousin. "They both died last winter. Miss Betty from pneumonia, and a few days after Miss Patty was found dead sitting in her rocking chair."

And so they have gone back to their old home, and are sleeping by the old Colonel and his gentle wife, and the hills and valleys around about their resting-place are again blossoming like the rose, even as they blossomed when the sisters were young and beautiful, and played and sang "Thou Hast Learned to Love Another" as their lovers rode away.

OFF FOR THE COUNTRY.

SUMMER has come, and the hot sun is scorching and searing the earth that a short time ago was clad in Spring's green livery. Great clouds of yellow dust fly down the deserted streets, chased by the burning south wind, that withers the leaves on the trees and the grass in its flight. One's very soul yearns for the shady woods and the sweet green meadows such weather as this.

"Oh, for a breath of fresh air," I gasp faintly, and I arise and look at the thermometer which hangs outside the window. Heavens, the mercury is still climbing! And I sink back on the couch, warmer than ever.

Winningways and Tiny are pressing their faces against the dusty window-screens, and have black noses in consequence, but I am too languid to remonstrate with them.

It will soon be over, this struggle with the

heat and with the dust, for we are preparing for flight. Yesterday we clothed the chairs and tables in linen garments, and put cheese-cloth trousers on the piano and tables. The curtains are down and the rugs rolled up into the garret. The house plants, all of which seemed to be in a decline, have been sent to the green-house to recuperate. And now Philanthropy is kneeling on the book-case with her mouth full of pins, covering the pictures with red tarlatan. Her task is nearly completed, and I am glad, for I have been so afraid she would sneeze during the process and swallow the pins.

At present she is hiding her great-grandmother's features from the light of day. I have always regretted not having a great-grandfather's portrait to match the great-grandmother's; it would give a better impression, for real, aristocratic ancestors should go in pairs. We have our grandfather's clock, but not his picture. One day I was passing an auction store, and saw a man holding up before

an unappreciative audience an elderly gentleman's portrait which resembled my grandfather as I remember him; anyway, it was a picture of an ancestor one might well be proud of. "Look," I exclaimed to Philanthropy, who was with me, "Let us go in and buy him to match the grandmother." I still remember, vividly, the look Philanthropy gave me. We did not buy the old gentleman, and so the old lady hangs alone still, and is having two layers of tarlatan pinned over her patient face. Philanthropy turns her attention next to a family group. This was taken years ago when Prince Knowledge and Prince Active were in dresses, and Princess Philanthropy wore a round comb and pinafore. They are represented seated on a grassy terrace, and in the distance one catches a glimpse of an imposing castle. I am sure the kind artist wanted to convey the flattering impression that the children were inmates of the castle. In the background there is also a fountain and some pieces of statuary. Some

near-sighted and rather stupid friends have taken the statuary for other members of the family. Philanthropy has suggested destroying this picture, which she says lacks artistic tone, but I will not part with it; I gaze at it often with tender affection. Those little children have disappeared. I cannot remember when I first missed them, and though their places are filled by a tall maiden and two tall youths, yet I love to look at those chubby faces that used to nestle so confidingly to my bosom years ago.

Philanthropy also covered a portrait of myself, which was executed and presented to me by a talented friend. It is a relief to me when it is completely hidden from view, for I cannot believe it represents me at my best, although the family insist that it is a flattering likeness. At last the Princess takes the last pin from her mouth and descends.

The next day we bring down the saratoga, preparatory to dropping into its depths the

wearing apparel of the family. The saratoga is never called into use except when the family travel in a body, and are to alight under their own roof-tree, so to speak. To take it visiting would be madness. The hostess would probably die from shock, or, if she survived the first glimpse, would live to see her hall gas fixture torn out by the roots and her front door demolished.

We always select for the saratoga's first layer something that can stand considerable crushing without injury, and that will not be needed at a moment's notice. I remember Active's camping suit, and arise from my kneeling position, where I had been gazing reflectively into the trunk's depths, and go in search of the suit. Scarcely is my back turned when a shriek pierces the summer air. I turn terror-stricken. Nothing visible but Tiny's heels. She has fallen head-first into the saratoga!

The next day we start. Each of the young

princesses takes a doll for a traveling companion, and we take also the dog, the cat, the parrot and the canary. Three men wrestle with the saratoga, but it gets the better of them at each round; finally they clinch and all roll down the stairs together. No lives are lost, and we are so grateful for this information that we ask for no further particulars.

Just as the round sun is setting, we sail out into the calm, beautiful inland sea. The sky and waves are alike touched with crimson, reflected from the glowing west. "Another hot day for to-morrow," some one reads aloud from an evening paper, but not for us, and we close our eyes, and the cool air fans our heated brows. "Look, mamma, over your right shoulder," Gentleness says. I do as she bids and see the new moon hung in the summer sky. And so we sail away, and the roses fade from the water and from the sky, and the stars come out and the young moon sends a bright path in front of us, no doubt

to guide us to that enchanted island in the far north for which we sigh, where summer mingles with her own beauty the freshness of spring and the golden satisfaction of autumn; where the trees grow and the flowers blossom where God planted them, where the wind comes to us freshened from its journey across the silvery straits, and perfumed from the fragrant pine woods through which it blows all the long, golden summer days.

THE HOUSE ON THE HILL.

THE House is built on a hill, and up the hill we are slowly climbing. At the top Princess Philanthropy and Prince Knowledge are already standing and are waving encouragingly as if to say, "Behold us—be diligent as we were, and some time you will stand where we do," but that some time seems a great way off at the present moment, for Winningways and I are still discouragingly near the foot and our feet have a strange knack of slipping backwards. Once when we had made some progress and had paused to breathe, the child's hat blew off and we were obliged to begin all over again. The other travelers are scattered over the hillside at various points between the proud victors and Winningways and myself. The windows of the house on the hill are boarded up, which makes the dwelling look like a monster playing blind-man's

buff with the other houses in the neighborhood.

All have now reached the top but Winningways and myself. A feeling of despair creeps over me. Am I to die in sight of the promised land? Just then Active and Generosity lean over and each give me a helping hand, and I am dragged to the summit and sink breathless on the daisy-bedecked sward. "If you would only climb differently, mamma," Philanthropy remarks, "and not double up in that manner, you would find it less difficult." I am unable to reply and gasp on in silence.

It is a perfect June day; the meadows wear the livery of early summer and the breeze that comes to us is full of promise of happy days to come. The waters lie blue and shining as far as eye can reach, and the white ships sail along calmly and slowly; why hasten? The June days are long and the summer is in its infancy. Refreshed and soothed by the scene I scramble to my feet,

and the procession moves on. We open the rustic gate hung about with wild honeysuckle, climb the steps of our dwelling and we are at our journey's end. The Useful Man who dwells the year around in the little town beneath the hill is already taking the boards from the windows, and letting in the sunlight. We gaze around the familiar room and are a trifle surprised to find things unchanged and as we left them months ago. The lovely maiden who hangs over the fireplace wears the same smile with which she bade us good-bye last autumn,—surely she did not smile thus through the long dark night of winter; but if she has been grieving, she keeps her secret well. The crane on the fire-screen is still standing artistically on one foot; how unwise of him not to have put down the other and rested up during our absence; perhaps he did, but he declines to enlighten us upon the subject. Here are some roses—odorless, colorless—dead, long since. Ralph brought them to Mignonne

last year—I remember the time well—it was the last night of the season, chill, and a trifle drear. The summer seemed dead. We had the Useful Man heap the fireplace with logs, and as the flames leaped high and the sparks flew up the chimney, we laughed and made merry and tried to forget it was the last night; but the thought would creep in now and then and cast a shadow over our joy. We had had such a happy summer and we could not bear that it should end. Mignonne played for us before we said good-night; I don't know what she played—some weird, sweet thing, which suited the time and the place. I saw Ralph bend over her and ask her to keep the roses he had given her and and which she wore in her bosom. I fancy she promised to do so, for he looked happy when he said good-night, and here the poor flowers lie, dead and forgotten. Ah, well! no doubt Ralph will bring her more roses this summer. A shriek of delight from

Winningways attracts me. She has discovered her doll in the corner where she had been meekly sitting for nearly a year, awaiting her tender little mother's coming. Winningways clasps her battered favorite to her heart, but the favorite does not return the caress, and her countenance wears a dull vacant expression. No doubt the cruel cold and the long night were more than her feeble intellect could withstand. But Winningways sees nothing amiss, so all is well.

We spend a busy day. The Useful Man is everywhere and does wonders. Princess Philanthropy and I sweep and dust, and scrub and rub. We hang the white curtains in the low, broad windows, and put fresh dresses on the couches and pillows. Knowledge and Active put up the hammocks on the porches and under the trees. Generosity and the younger members of the family are sent hither and thither for ferns, clover blossoms, buttercups and daisies. Later in the season

Princess Philanthropy hopes to have rarer flowers, but at present we are content with these humble blossoms, which the wild winds have sown, and which spring up over the meadows and hillsides to make beautiful the earth against our coming.

As the day grows late we find our tasks finished, and we sit down to rest and enjoy the fruits of our labor. Through the west window we see the solemn pine woods, stirring gently in the summer breeze; now and then we catch the note of some bird, who finds himself well nigh companionless in this far northern spot. Before us, as in the morning, lie the placid waters, but the setting sun has turned artist, and the ships sail on a crimson sea. As the the sun sinks out of sight, from the old fort booms the sunset gun. Our first day is over. God grant us many more as bright and as full of peace. Winningways is nearly asleep in the hammock, hugging her disabled pet. Princess Philanthropy has covered her pretty head,

lest the bats which are sailing around should tangle their feet in her bright locks. The twilight is closing in. Reluctantly I leave the peaceful scene and go indoors to light the lamps; ere I do so I glance out of my dear west window. It is already deep night in the solemn pine woods.

IMOGENE'S PICNIC.

THERE is a little white cottage down the lane with a white fence around it, and two huge lilac bushes growing in front; the bushes are so near the house that one gets the impression a little way off that they have been planted indoors and are growing out of the windows. This cottage Imogene's mother has taken for the season, and Imogene dwells therein. Hither she has brought her dainty wardrobe, her favorite rugs, her writing desk, her books, some tiny pictures and many more of her pretty belongings, Between the lilac bushes she had hung a golden-colored hammock, and there, half hidden among the blue silk pillows, my lady swings many hours of the long summer days. In the evening she walks up the lane to see us; and our rich neighbor who lives in the green house (and was rather inclined to look down on us a

trifle, when she saw we were on such friendly terms with Imogene, became quite gracious, and handed me a bunch of poppies over the fence yesterday.

One day, not long ago, Imogene grew tired of swinging and raised herself upon her elbow and pondered. Then she put one dainty foot among the lilacs, then the other, and sprang lightly to the ground; then she walked briskly down the village street. She walked as one walks who has a purpose in view; hers was no constitutional, neither was it an idle saunter. When she returned and climbed into the hammock, she had the air of one who had accomplished her purpose. "Yes," she said to herself as she swung to and fro, "The Thistledown is engaged, the luncheon ordered, and the guests invited."

While Imogene had been swinging in her hammock among the lilacs, she had caught a glimpse of a tiny speck of land, miles and miles away, and one evening after a storm, a rain-

bow had sprung up from that very spot, and the other end had reached over nearly to Imogene's hammock. "What fun it would be," thought Imogene, "to sail over to that fair spot in the Thistledown, eat luncheon on the shore, and then sail home in the golden sunset time."

And so it came to pass that on a fair summer morning, Imogene and Ralph and Mignonne and Philanthropy and Knowledge, and many others, waved adieux to me as I stood rather disconsolately on the pier, and the Thistledown's sails filled, and the waves danced and sparkled and they sailed away, bound for the far-off place where the rainbow sprung from. I watched them as long as I could catch a glimpse of the white sails, then began to count the hours until the sunset time should bring them back to me. Alas for our well-laid plans. In the afternoon, and while the sun was yet high in the heavens, a gray fog settled over the world and wiped the waters from our view as if

they had never been. As the day grew later the fog grew denser—more clinging, and hung before our faces like a pall. Not a breath stirred, and the pines, like huge ghosts, lifted their gray arms to Heaven, as if in supplication for the sunless world. The steamers, invisible, but telling of their presence by their dismal bells of warning, crept timidly up and down the straits. Where, oh where were the happy sailors who started off so joyously in the bright morning? How could they find their way home in this breathless calm—through this cruel, impenetrable mist? We stood on the shore and watched for some shadow that might prove to be the Thistledown. We shouted aloud, but were answered by the echo of our own voices. At last the gray mist darkened and became black. Night was upon us, and yet the Thistledown sailed not into port. All through the night we watched and waited; was there ever a night so long or so full of fears? How we hailed with

delight the first faint streaks of dawn, but there was no white sail visible to our anxious eyes. Imogene and her young friends came not with the new day. As the light grew stronger, away off on the horizon line we caught a glimpse of a tiny white speck. Certainly the speck grew larger. God grant it might be the sail for which we waited. We brush away the tears that we might see the clearer. Suppose it was some other craft, what then? Could we still manage to hope, and believe that all was well? A fresh breeze sprang up and rippled the blue waters, the ship in the distance increased its speed, and soon, oh joy inexpressible! all doubt vanished; it was the Thistledown bounding toward us with its precious cargo.

The picnic party looked a trifle travel-worn as they came ashore to be kissed and wept over by the anxious watchers. "Did you expect us to sail without wind, and through the dismal fog, mamma dear?" Philanthropy asks, as

she fondly dries my tear-stained countenance. I make no audible reply, but down in my heart I say, "God be praised that Imogene's picnic is over."

And now my lady swings in her golden hammock among her silk pillows hung high in the lilacs, and is content to gaze from afar at the distant speck of land where the rainbow sprung from.

LIZA.

IT IS midsummer. The season has reached its prime. The days are long, bright and still, the waters are as calm as if the sea was glass, and reflect the blue sky with the exactness of a mirror. Nature is taking a breathing spell ere she makes ready for the harvest. Early this morning we started off on a little steamer to this island—St. Helena they call it—and though it threatens danger to the passing ships, lying as it does in their pathway up the lakes, to us it is a peaceful haven. I have promised to read a story to the young people and they gather around under the trees, but near enough to the waters to feel the cool breeze, and I begin my task.

Her name was Liza, and she was one of a numerous family; her mother was a slave, and Liza knew nothing of freedom, save what the birds and wild flowers may have taught her.

When her rich master died, his slaves were divided according to the law of the land, among his children, and it fell to little Liza's lot to be given to a son who had left home early in life, and had settled in a large city. And so the little girl was torn from her mother and from her young companions, who, like herself, were content in bondage; from the hills, the valleys, the deep shady woods; from the little cabin she loved, and which was the only home she had ever known.

This child, although her skin was dark, had a soul made in the image and likeness of God; she could feel keenly both joy and sorrow, and in her new home she was sad of heart. She missed the things she had loved and had been ruthlessly parted from forever. She would sit in the kitchen doorway after her daily tasks were finished, and the great tears would flow unchecked down her dusky cheeks, tears which welled up from her homesick little soul. One evening when poor Liza was feeling more lonely

even than usual, a little child, her new master's first born, escaped from its nurse and toddled over to where she was sitting. The child gazed with pity into the dark, tear-filled eyes of the little slave. "Baby loves you, don't cry," she lisped, And straightway Liza opened her arms, caught up the child and held it close against her poor aching heart. Love had accomplished another miracle. Poor Liza forgot her sorrow and was made happy by a baby's kiss.

After that day the friendship between those two grew apace, and soon it was discovered that the child was never so good, or so happy, as when with the little colored girl. They would walk hand in hand over the meadow, and the little country girl would point out to her young charge the countless treasures with which she was familiar. Liza always knew where to look for the four-leaf clovers, and the butterflies and dragon-flies seemed to come at her call. Then they would sit together in in the summer twilight, the golden head nestled

close to the black, wooly one, and Liza would build wonderful air castles for the child's amusement. The baby was always to be a beautiful princess, and Liza always her happy slave. To this child, young tyrant though she was, Liza gave her whole heart, mighty in its capacity for love. Gradually the slave mother, and the young slave companions, and the little cabin faded from her memory, and became as a half forgotten dream, and her affection, concentrated, intensified, and was bestowed upon her little charge; for finally, her fidelity and capability being evident, she was given entire care of the child. Those were happy days for the slave girl—the only ones she was ever to know, and they were happy days for Little Lady—this was Liza's pet name for her—for she was sheltered and protected by a love which was free from alloy.

Early each morning Liza would take the child from the crib and carry her into the nursery. No royal princess' toilet was ever

accomplished with more care than was Little Lady's, so lovingly was each yellow curl brushed over Liza's dark finger, and she would soothe and entertain the child meanwhile with infinite tenderness and affection. And when the baby was made as fair to see as loving skill could make her, then Liza would kneel and gaze in silent admiration into the chubby face. Little Lady was, no doubt, as commonplace as most babies, but Liza's love glorified and transformed her into a being of perfect grace and beauty.

Two years passed thus, and then it was noticed that the little slave girl was growing thinner, and the great black eyes were growing brighter and brighter. "Little Lady," she said one day, "poah Liza can't tote you no moh, she done los' her bref." This was a great deprivation to the patient slave, not to be able to carry the great healthy girl, who weighed nearly as much as she did, up and down the stairs.

But much was left them yet; they could stroll up and down the garden paths, and Liza could tell the wonderful stories that Little Lady loved to hear.

It soon became apparent to even the most casual observer that Liza was failing, and so a physician was sent for. He put his wise ear against her hollow chest and shook his head; nothing could be done for her, it was merely a matter of time. Her master would not lose much, for she never could have grown into a robust woman, and in this work-a-day world the weakly are apt to be in the way, and so it was settled that little Liza must die. In the meantime, the child whom she worshipped must be kept away from her; someone else must care for the baby. This someone else was, no doubt, wiser than Liza and good enough in her way, but Little Lady missed sorely the limitless love, and boundless patience of her dusky little playmate. And poor Liza! When her little charge was taken from her, she no longer tried to hide

her weakness, but took to her bed, where she lay day after day, racked with pain, consumed with fever, her arms empty, the baby gone. But when those around her explained to her that it was best for the child that they should be separated, she made no complaint, but the great tears fell silently on her little pillow.

She knew she was going to die. The doctor did not think it worth his while to disguise his meaning, nor did those about her, while they were kind enough, take her feelings seriously into consideration. The fact that she must die was calmly accepted. Once every day Little Lady was brought in to see her, not so much for Liza's sake, as because the little girl herself insisted upon it. "Take me to see my own Liza," she would cry, and so they would take her to the bedside, and she would pat lovingly the poor sunken cheeks with her soft baby hand. And Liza would gaze into the rosy face with the same admiration, and run her thin fingers through the golden curls with the

tenderness of yore. So there was some brightness yet in poor Liza's dark days.

It was autumn, and the dreary rain and the falling leaves added to the little invalid's sorrow. They sharpened the contrast between the sad present and the summer days which were dead. Oh ! if those happy days could come back again, when Liza and Little Lady sat beneath the trees and watched the ants build their tiny houses; or when they gathered the early spring flowers and made daisy chains to hang about their necks. But those days are gone forever. Poor Liza would listen to the falling rain and the baby's voice crying in the distant room, and she would wonder in her ignorant fashion, as wiser heads than hers have wondered, why such innocent joys might not have lasted, and why such bitter sorrow should have come into her life.

Liza was very anxious to live until Christmas. She dared not ask those about her how many days might yet be hers, for fear they would

shatter this, her last hope. "If I could live 'til Christmas," she would say during the long dark hours of the night, "I'd go willin'. Please Lawd, let Liza stay on dis heah arth 'til Christmas; I wants to spen' that money for Little Lady; she done set her heart on dat basket; let Liza give it to her for a shore nuff presen', den Lawd, I's willin' to go."

Once in the happy days when Liza was well, during their wanderings she had lifted the Little Lady up to gaze into a shop window. The child espied a china basket which she admired greatly, whereupon Liza conceived the stupendous idea of giving it to her for a "shore nuff Christmas presen'." So she saved her occasional pennies with a miser's greed; nothing could tempt her to spend one, lest the extravagance should postpone the purchase, and now was Death to rob her of this, her last pleasure? Poor little Liza! How often she had pictured it all to herself: the dusk of the Christmas morn; Little Lady carried down to see the wonderful things

Santa Claus had left for her; then the gifts for grandma, papa, mamma, aunts and uncles. When all these had been seen and admired, then would come Liza's turn. She would take the child over to some quiet corner and show her the wonderful basket, and then tell her it was for her, from Liza, bought with Liza's own money. How the child would stare with pleasure and surprise! And then, no doubt, she would throw her arms around the slave's neck and kiss her. That would more than repay Liza, for love like unto hers asks merely for the privilege to love. "Doan't take me befoe Christmas, deah Lawd," such was her constant prayer.

But one dreary morning found her so weak, that it was evident to those about her that she could live but a few hours, and Christmas was several weeks off yet. She seemed to realize this somewhat herself, and she asked if she were dying. "You are very ill, Liza," her nurse replied. "Can't I live to Christmas, no how?"

She read the answer in the nurse's face, She was silent for awhile, then she said faintly: "Send for my Little Lady." So the child was brought to look for the last time into the sad eyes, which, even when dimmed by the shadow of death, still beamed upon her with a deathless love.

The little colored girl drew from beneath her pillow a shabby purse. "Deah Little Lady," she said, so faintly that the child bent lower to catch the words, "dis is the money I done saved up foe yoah Christmas gif', but poah Liza won't be heah den, so you must buy dat china basket yoah own self to 'member poah Liza. Good bye, honey, an' doan't forget I done love you a heap."

The baby's lips were pressed on the dark cheek, and at the touch the poor slave's heart gave one throb of joy, and was then stilled forever.

When I have finished there is a silence for awhile. Away up in this free land it is diffi-

cult for us to believe that beings with souls were bought and sold, once upon a time, in this, our country, that makes liberty its boast. "Poor little Liza," some one says sadly, and then my listeners scatter, too gay and happy to be saddened long over the story of a little slave who died years ago. I am left alone with Winningways.

THE SUMMER IS OVER.

PRINCESS Philanthropy is out in her flower garden, gathering her last blossoms, for the summer is over, and Philanthropy could not leave her flowers to die neglected and alone. "I will give them to the Useful Man's wife," she said, as she started out with her garden basket and scissors. The hills and the meadows are still dressed in gold and white, but the buttercups and daisies have given place to the stately goldenrod and pale immortelles. The children have bidden adieu to their favorite haunts. They have taken down the swings and hammocks, and their little faces are pensive this Autumn morning as is Nature's. The day is bright, but there is something sad in the air and in our hearts, for the sweet summer is dead.

I go to the west window to take a last, long look at the pine woods. The sunshine sifts

through their branches like gold dust, and they are wrapped in a golden haze. They have nothing to fear from Autumn, for they will not kindle at her touch, and even the winter does but cover their green branches with her ermine. I bid them a silent farewell and turn away. "Come, Philanthropy," I call, "the red wagon is coming up the hill for our trunks," and she enters, bringing with her great bunches of sweet peas, nasturtians, and rainbow-hued chrysanthemums. It will be hard for the Useful Man's wife to believe the summer is over when she receives these. We start down the hill; the red wagon heads the procession. The same hill we climbed that bright June morning when the summer was before us. We pass the house in the lane, but Imogene no longer swings in her golden hammock, and the lilacs nod solemnly at us as we go by. We walk through the little town, which is already settling down for its long winter's nap. The inhabitants stand in their doorways and curtesy at us as we pass.

The shopkeepers smile at us beseechingly, but we cannot be beguiled into making a last purchase. We may not tarry, for the ship stands ready to bear us away. On the pier are Ralph and Mignonne; they will linger still longer and make believe it is yet summer time. Generosity throws them a bunch of immortelles, as deathless as is true love. The Useful Man looks at us regretfully and now and then wipes his eyes; but whether the tears spring from grief or the sun's rays it is hard to say. On his weather-beaten coat he wears a spray of goldenrod, which Beauty gave him; he turns away sadly, and the little red wagon rattles up the hill for the last time. Winningways lifts her doll, which she has not forgotten this time, over the boat railing, so that it may have an unobstructed view of the people on the pier, but the doll does not appreciate any effort to cheer her up, and still wears the same vacant expression that last winter's neglect spread over her countenance.

The bell rings, the shrill whistle pierces the

autumn air and we are off. We give a farewell glance to the house on the hill. Already the Useful Man is covering the windows and night has settled down where the sunlight shone an hour before. The girl over the fireplace has, perhaps, ceased to smile, and the crane, sheltered by the darkness, has probably put down his other foot. We wave them adieu though they cannot see us. We bid them be hopeful though they cannot hear us.

"Good bye, good bye," we shout to those on the pier as the boat glides away. "God bless you all, and keep you safe until we meet again."

THANKSGIVING.

TO-DAY is Thanksgiving. The snow covers the earth and the wind howls as if it were midwinter. We look out through the misty windows and see the people hurrying through the streets, muffled to the eyes; but indoors all is brighter by contrast with the dreariness without. The flames dance on the hearth, and the roses which Imogene brought us this morning fill the room with a fragrance that belongs not to winter.

Mignonne sits at the piano and softly plays an old-fashioned melody which is fitting for this old-fashioned holiday. And Aunt and Uncle Pollycarp, and Ralph and Clementina, and all of our dearest friends have come to eat with us our Thanksgiving dinner. "It promises to be a bitter winter," Imogene says to Philanthropy, "we must be up and doing. Our Club meets next week, but I fear we have not

much to commence with." "We have some red flannel," Philanthropy answers, and then, seeing me smile, the girls draw their chairs together and the conversation is continued in a low tone.

Uncle Pollycarp gazes silently into the fire; then he says, half sadly, "How different this is from the Thanksgivings years ago in the old home. Roses bloomed there until Christmas, and the meadows were clad in green the year round; I dread the long winter before us," and as he speaks he draws nearer the cheerful blaze. "Ah!" says Clementina, "how sweet the spring is after the winter; those who live where summer reigns the year round miss the joy of the changing seasons." But Uncle Pollycarp gazes out into the snow-hidden streets, shivers slightly and is silent. "I wonder how the house on the hill looks such a day as this," Knowledge remarks, and as he speaks before my mind rises a picture of a dwelling blindfolded, half buried in snow drifts, guarded by

huge pine trees, which wave and toss their ermine-clad branches in the bitter winter wind. In the little town under the hill the Useful Man sits gazing out at the ice-clad strait, longing for the spring. The picture fades and I see the children dancing joyously around the room with perpetual summer in their little hearts. Winningways carries a new doll in her arms; her old favorite succumbed to some brain trouble in spite of change of scene and careful nursing, and after a few downcast days the little mother transferred her affections to her new darling, which, I am happy to say, seems to have a robust constitution.

Mignonne plays softly "Home, Sweet Home;" the children join in, singing at the top of their sweet, childish voices. Uncle Pollycarp arouses himself from his dreams of the past, and the old home with its long summers, is, for the time being at least, forgotten. Outside the snow continues to fall, and the wind tries to get in at the windows and down the

chimney. We draw the curtains and light the lamps and forget the outer world. We must be happy and thankful on this festival which comes in the dreariest time of the year, and stands out the brighter for its dull setting.

Later, when we gather around the table—an unbroken circle, thank God—Uncle Pollycarp bows his head and says softly, "For these and all Thy blessings, Heavenly Father, we thank Thee." And from the bottom of our grateful hearts we say "Amen."

CHRISTMAS EVE.

IT is Christmas Eve, and I am on the top of a step ladder in the cedar closet, looking for the children's stockings. Is it possible that a whole year has passed since I rolled them in camphor and put them on the upper shelf, which I find much difficulty in reaching at the present moment. It seems but as yesterday; I remember I sighed as I put them away, for one never knows what a year may bring forth. Why do these joyous festivals have always running through their mirth a minor strain, as indeed have all the pleasures we enjoy in this fickle old world of ours?

As I make these remarks mentally, the step-ladder creaks and shivers ominously. I grasp the closet door in terror, but nothing happens, and when my confidence is somewhat restored, I make a wild clutch at the upper shelf, secure the stockings and warily descend.

These stockings, which I proceed to fasten to the clothesline which stretched across the fireplace, are no every-day affairs, or outgrown finery. They were built expressly for Santa Claus' generous purposes—wide of calf, broad of toe, hung around with silver bells, the names of the owner upon each to avoid all misunderstandings with regard to proprietorship.

They are almost painfully realistic in their proportions. Those belonging to the older ones are as long as the rent roll of a wealthy landlord, and they gradually shrink along the line, at the end of which Princess Winningways tiny affair dangles.

The owners of the stockings are absent. The longer ones, so to speak, are at an evening party; the shorter ones are asleep. So I gather together all the good things, and all the precious things which have been hidden away for many days, and proceed to give to each what belongs to each. A happy task! And, as I work, there comes before my mind a

vision of the children's joy and surprise when to-morrow dawns. A happy task! And yet I find Prince Knowledge and Princess Philanthropy's legs discouragingly long. I seem to make little headway, although my supply is visibly diminished; and in a narrow-minded moment, I drop into the lank depths two huge apples which stop midway in their descent, and thus form a new foundation upon which I build rapidly. I toil on until all the limbs assume aldermanic proportions, and groan audibly under their weight of good things. The rope sags threateningly at one end, and at the other poor Winningway's stocking kicks the beam.

My task is finished. I give the fire a few stimulating pokes, shake up the pine pillow (which brings back the breath of a dead summer) on my favorite rocker, and sit down to reflect. I am alone, and after all is said and done, solitude has its charms. One needs time to take stock, as it were—to lay in more

patience, if we find we are running low in that commodity; to see that we have courage and fortitude in reserve, for we may have unexpected calls upon these virtues; to rest the tired nerves, lest we say, because of them, some hasty word which can never be unsaid, though we should weep oceans of regretful tears. We can be together such a few years at best. Time brings about cruel changes, and oftentimes puts the seas between hearts that love. What if some Christmas Eve should find my chimney stockingless and desolate, the dear feet wandering over the wide, wide world? Perish the thought! I have them yet with me; how happy I should be. And I arise, and in a contrite spirit push the apples down to the heels in Philanthropy's and Knowledge's stockings, though the walls bulge and threaten to fly asunder, and I fill the vacuum caused by my heroic action with the reserve stock.

In the church across the street the children are practicing the Christmas hymns. I go to

the window and gaze out into the night. The world is silent and chill and the stars look a great way off. "We hold our treasures by such a slender cord, and Heaven is so far away," I say sadly. Just then a wave of melody reaches me; children's voices, sweet and clear, blended with the organ's tone, "Glory to God in the Highest, and on Earth Peace to Men of Good Will."

I listen until the last note dies away on the winter air, and something of the peace they sing of touches my soul. I am content to leave all things with Him, who, on this night, was born in a manger in far-off Bethlehem, for the love of us.

Princess Philanthropy's step is on the stair; she has returned from the feast. She must not find Santa Claus awake, so I turn down the gas and flee.

FINIS.

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